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THE  
INTEREST IN SLAVERY  
OF THE  
Southern Non-Slaveholder.

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THE RIGHT OF PEACEFUL SECESSION.

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27-25  
SLAVERY IN THE BIBLE.

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CHARLESTON:

STEAM-POWER PRESSES OF EVANS & COGSWELL,  
No. 3 Broad and 102 East Bay Streets.

1860.



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## THE Non-Slaveholders of the South.

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NASHVILLE, Dec. 5, 1860.

*My dear Sir:*—Whilst in Charleston recently, I adverted, in conversation with you, to some considerations affecting the question of slavery in its application to the several classes of population at the South and especially to the non-slaveholding class, who, I maintained, were even more deeply interested than any other in the maintainance of our institutions, and in the success of the movement now inaugurated, for the entire social, industrial and political independence of the South. At your request, I promised to elaborate and commit to writing the points of that conversation, which I now proceed to do, in the hope that I may thus be enabled to give some feeble aid to a cause which is worthy of the Sydneys, Hampdens and Patrick Henrys, of earlier times.

When in charge of the national census office, several years since, I found that it had been stated by an abolition Senator from his seat, that the number of slaveholders at the South did not exceed 150,000. Convinced that it was a gross misrepresentation of the facts, I caused a careful examination of the returns to be made, which fixed the actual number at 347,255, and communicated the information, by note, to Senator Cass, who read it in the Senate. I first called attention to the fact that the number embraced slaveholding families, and that to arrive at the actual number of slaveholders, it would be necessary to multiply by the proportion of persons, which the census showed to a family. When this was done, the number was swelled to about 2,000,000.

Since these results were made public, I have had reason to think, that the separation of the schedules of the slave and the free, was calculated to lead to omissions of the single properties, and that on this account it would be safe to put the number of families at 375,000, and the number of actual slaveholders at about two million and a quarter.

Assuming the published returns, however, to be correct, it will appear that one-half of the population of South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, excluding the cities, are slaveholders, and that



one-third of the population of the entire South are similarly circumstanced. The average number of slaves is nine to each slave-holding family, and one-half of the whole number of such holders are in possession of less than five slaves.

It will thus appear that the slaveholders of the South, so far from constituting numerically an insignificant portion of its people, as has been malignantly alleged, make up an aggregate, greater in relative proportion than the holders of any other species of property whatever, in any part of the world; and that of no other property can it be said, with equal truthfulness, that it is an interest of the whole community. Whilst every other family in the States I have specially referred to, are slaveholders, but one family in every three and a half families in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut, are holders of agricultural land; and, in European States, the proportion is almost indefinitely less. The proportion which the slaveholders of the South, bear to the entire population is greater than that of the owners of land or houses, agricultural stock, State, bank, or other corporation securities anywhere else. No political economist will deny this. Nor is that all. Even in the States which are among the largest slaveholding, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee, the land proprietors outnumber nearly two to one, in relative proportion, the owners of the same property in Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut, and if the average number of slaves held by each family throughout the South be but nine, and if one-half of the whole number of slaveholders own under five slaves, it will be seen how preposterous is the allegation of our enemies, that the slaveholding class is an organized wealthy aristocracy. *The poor men of the South are the holders of one to five slaves, and it would be equally consistent with truth and justice, to say that they represent, in reality, its slaveholding interest.*

The fact being conceded that there is a very large class of persons in the slaveholding States, who have no direct ownership in slaves; it may be well asked, upon what principle a greater antagonism can be presumed between them and their fellow-citizens, than exists among the larger class of non-landholders in the free States and the landed interest there? If a conflict of interest exists in one instance, it does in the other, and if patriotism and public spirit are to be measured upon so low a standard, the social fabric at the North is in far greater danger of dissolution than it is here.

Though I protest against the false and degrading standard, to which Northern orators and statesmen have reduced the measure of patriotism, which is to be expected from a free and enlightened people, and in the name of the non-slaveholders of the South, fling back the insolent charge that they are only bound to their country by its "loaves and fishes," and would be found derelict in honor and principle and public virtue in proportion as they are needy in circumstances; I think it but easy to show that the in-



terest of the poorest non-slaveholder among us, is to make common cause with, and die in the last trenches in defence of, the slave property of his more favored neighbor.

The non-slaveholders of the South may be classed as either such as desire and are incapable of purchasing slaves, or such as have the means to purchase and do not because of the absence of the motive, preferring to hire or employ cheaper white labor. A class conscientiously objecting to the ownership of slave-property, does not exist at the South, for all such scruples have long since been silenced by the profound and unanswerable arguments to which Yankee controversy has driven our statesmen, popular orators and clergy. Upon the sure testimony of God's Holy Book, and upon the principles of universal polity, they have defended and justified the institution. The exceptions which embrace recent importations into Virginia, and into some of the Southern cities from the free States of the North, and some of the crazy, socialistic Germans in Texas, are too unimportant to affect the truth of the proposition.

The non-slaveholders are either urban or rural, including among the former the merchants, traders, mechanics, laborers and other classes in the towns and cities; and among the latter, the tillers of the soil in sections where slave property either could, or could not be profitably employed.

As the *competition of free labor with slave labor* is the gist of the argument used by the opponents of slavery, and as it is upon this that they rely in support of a future social *conflict* in our midst, it is clear that in cases where the competition cannot possibly exist, the argument, whatever weight it might otherwise have, must fall to the ground.

Now, from what can such competition be argued in our cities? Are not all the interests of the merchant and those whom he employs of necessity upon the side of the slaveholder? The products which he buys, the commodities which he sells, the profits which he realizes, the hopes of future fortune which sustain him; all spring from this source, and from no other. The cities, towns and villages of the South, are but so many agencies for converting the products of slave labor into the products of other labor obtained from abroad, and as in every other agency the interest of the agent is, that the principal shall have as much as possible to sell, and be enabled as much as possible to buy. In the absence of every other source of wealth at the South, its mercantile interests are so interwoven with those of slave labor as to be almost identical. What is true of the merchant is true of the clerk, the drayman, or the laborer whom he employs—the mechanic who builds his houses, the lawyer who argues his causes, the physician who heals, the teacher, the preacher, etc., etc. If the poor mechanic could have ever complained of the competition, in the cities, of slave labor with his, that cause or complaint in the enormous increase of value of slave property has

failed, since such increase has been exhausting the cities and towns of slave labor, or making it so valuable that he can work in competition with it and receive a rate of remuneration greatly higher than in any of the non-slaveholding towns or cities at the North. In proof of this, it is only necessary to advert to the example of the City of Charleston, which has a larger proportion of slaves than any other, at the South, where the first flag of Southern independence was unfurled, and where the entire people, with one voice, rich and poor, merchant, mechanic and laborer, stand nobly together. Another illustration may be found in the city of New York, almost as dependent upon Southern slavery as Charleston itself, which records a majority of nearly thirty thousand votes against the further progress of abolitionism.

As the competition does not exist in the cities it is equally certain that it does not exist in those sections of the South, which are employed upon the cultivation of commodities, in which slave labor could not be used, and that there exists no conflict there except in the before stated cases of Virginia and Texas, and some of the counties of Missouri, Maryland and Kentucky. These exceptions are, however, too unimportant to affect the great question of slavery in fifteen States of the South, and are so kept in check as to be incapable of effecting any mischief even in the communities referred to. It would be the baldest absurdity to suppose, that the poor farmers of South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee, who grow corn, wheat, bacon and hogs and horses, are brought into any sort of competition with the slaves of these or other States, who, while they consume these commodities, produce but little or none of them.

The competition and conflict, if such exist at the South, between slave labor and free labor, is reduced to the single case of such labor being employed side by side, in the production of the same commodities and could be felt only in the cane, cotton, tobacco and rice fields, where almost the entire agricultural slave labor is exhausted. Now, any one cognizant of the actual facts, will admit that the free labor which is employed upon these crops, disconnected from and in actual independence of the slaveholder, is a very insignificant item in the account, and whether in accord or in conflict would affect nothing the permanency and security of the institution. It is a competition from which the non-slaveholder cheerfully retires when the occasion offers, his physical organization refusing to endure that exposure to tropical suns and fatal miasmas which alone are the condition of profitable culture and any attempt to reverse the laws which God has ordained, is attended with disease and death. Of this the poor white foreign laborer upon our river swamps and in our southern cities, especially in Mobile and New Orleans, and upon the public works of the South, is a daily witness.

Having then followed out, step by step, and seen to what amounts the so much paraded competition and conflict between

the non-slaveholding and slaveholding interests of the South; I will proceed to present several general considerations which must be found powerful enough to influence the non-slaveholders, if the claims of patriotism were inadequate, to resist any attempt to overthrow the institutions and industry of the section to which they belong.

1. *The non-slaveholder of the South is assured that the remuneration afforded by his labor, over and above the expense of living, is larger than that which is afforded by the same labor in the free States.* To be convinced of this he has only to compare the value of labor in the Southern cities with those of the North, and to take note annually of the large number of laborers who are represented to be out of employment there, and who migrate to our shores, as well as to other sections. No white laborer in return has been forced to leave our midst or remain without employment. Such as have left, have immigrated from States where slavery was less productive. Those who come among us are enabled soon to retire to their homes with a handsome competency. The statement is nearly as true for the agricultural as for other interests, as the statistics will show.

The following table was recently compiled by Senator Johnson, of Tennessee, from information received in reply to a circular letter sent to the points indicated.

Daily wages in New Orleans, Charleston and Nashville :

| Bricklayers. | Carpenters. | Laborers   |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| \$2½ to 3½   | \$2½ to 2½  | \$1 to 1½. |

Daily wages in Chicago, Pittsburg and Lowell, Mass. :

| Bricklayers. | Carpenters. | Laborers.   |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$1½ to \$2  | \$1½ to 1¾  | 75c to \$1. |

The rates of board weekly for laborers as given in the census of 1850, were in Louisiana \$2 70, South Carolina \$1 75, Tennessee \$1 32, in Illinois \$1 49, Pennsylvania \$1 72, Massachusetts \$2 12. The wages of the agricultural classes as given in Parliamentary reports are in France \$20 to \$30 per annum with board. In Italy \$12 to \$20 per annum. In the United States agricultural labor is highest in the Southwest, and lowest in the Northwest, the South and North differing very little, by the official returns.

2. *The non-slaveholders, as a class, are not reduced by the necessity of our condition, as is the case in the free States, to find employment in crowded cities and come into competition in close and sickly workshops and factories, with remorseless and untiring machinery.* They have but to compare their condition in this particular with the mining and manufacturing operatives of the North and Europe, to be thankful that God has reserved them for a better fate. Tender women, aged men, delicate children, toil and labor there from early dawn until after candle light, from one year to



another, for a miserable pittance, scarcely above the starvation point and without hope of amelioration. The records of British free labor have long exhibited this and those of our own manufacturing States are rapidly reaching it and would have reached it long ago, but for the excessive bounties which in the way of tariffs have been paid to it, without an equivalent by the slaveholding and non-slaveholding laborer of the South. Let this tariff cease to be paid for a single year and the truth of what is stated will be abundantly shown.

3. *The non-slaveholder is not subjected to that competition with foreign pauper labor, which has degraded the free labor of the North and demoralized it to an extent which perhaps can never be estimated.* From whatever cause, it has happened, whether from climate, the nature of our products or of our labor, the South has been enabled to maintain a more homogeneous population and show a less admixture of races than the North. This the statistics show.

#### RATIO OF FOREIGN TO NATIVE POPULATION.

|                           |       |              |
|---------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Eastern States.....       | 12.65 | in every 100 |
| Middle States.....        | 19.84 | “ “          |
| Southern States.....      | 1.86  | “ “          |
| South-western States..... | 5.34  | “ “          |
| North-western States..... | 12.75 | “ “          |

Our people partake of the true American character, and are mainly the descendants of those who fought the battles of the Revolution, and who understand and appreciate the nature and inestimable value of the liberty which it brought. Adhering to the simple truths of the Gospel and the faith of their fathers, they have not run hither and thither in search of all the absurd and degrading isms which have sprung up in the rank soil of infidelity. They are not Mormons or Spiritualists, they are not Owenites, Fourierites, Agrarians, Socialists, Free-lovers or Millerites. They are not for breaking down all the forms of society and of religion and re-constructing them; but prefer law, order and existing institutions to the chaos which radicalism involves. The competition between native and foreign labor in the Northern States, has already begotten rivalry and heart-burning, and riots; and lead to the formation of political parties there which have been marked by a degree of hostility and proscription to which the present age has not afforded another parallel. At the South we have known none of this, except in two or three of the larger cities, where the relations of slavery and freedom scarcely exist at all. The foreigners that are among us at the South are of a select class, and from education and example approximate very nearly to the native standard.

4. *The non-slaveholder of the South preserves the status of the white man, and is not regarded as an inferior or a dependant.* He

is not told that the Declaration of Independence, when it says that all men are born free and equal, refers to the negro equally with himself. It is not proposed to him that the free negro's vote shall weigh equally with his own at the ballot-box, and that the little children of both colors shall be mixed in the classes and benches of the school-house, and embrace each other filially in its outside sports. It never occurs to him, that a white man could be degraded enough to boast in a public assembly, as was recently done in New York, of having actually slept with a negro. And his patriotic ire would crush with a blow the free negro who would dare, in his presence, as is done in the free States, to characterize the father of the country as a "scoundrel." No white man at the South serves another as a body servant, to clean his boots, wait on his table, and perform the menial services of his household. His blood revolts against this, and his necessities never drive him to it. He is a companion and an equal. When in the employ of the slaveholder, or in intercourse with him, he enters his hall, and has a seat at his table. If a distinction exists, it is only that which education and refinement may give, and this is so courteously exhibited as scarcely to strike attention. The poor white laborer at the North is at the bottom of the social ladder, whilst his brother here has ascended several steps and can look down upon those who are beneath him, at an infinite remove.

5. *The non-slaveholder knows that as soon as his savings will admit, he can become a slaveholder, and thus relieve his wife from the necessities of the kitchen and the laundry, and his children from the labors of the field.* This, with ordinary frugality, can, in general, be accomplished in a few years, and is a process continually going on. Perhaps twice the number of poor men at the South own a slave to what owned a slave ten years ago. The universal disposition is to purchase. It is the first use for savings, and the negro purchased is the last possession to be parted with. If a woman, her children become heir-looms and make the nucleus of an estate. It is within my knowledge, that a plantation of fifty or sixty persons has been established, from the descendants of a single female, in the course of the lifetime of the original purchaser.

6. *The large slaveholders and proprietors of the South begin life in great part as non-slaveholders.* It is the nature of property to change hands. Luxury, liberality, extravagance, depreciated land, low prices, debt, distribution among children, are continually breaking up estates. All over the new States of the South-west enormous estates are in the hands of men who began life as overseers or city clerks, traders or merchants. \*Often the overseer marries the widow. Cheap lands, abundant harvests, high prices, give the poor man soon a negro. His ten bales of cotton bring him another, a second crop increases his purchases, and so he goes on opening land and adding labor until in a few years his

draft for \$20,000 upon his merchant becomes a very marketable commodity.

7. *But should such fortune not be in reserve for the non-slaveholder, he will understand that by honesty and industry it may be realized to his children.* More than one generation of poverty in a family is scarcely to be expected at the South, and is against the general experience. It is more unusual here for poverty than wealth to be preserved through several generations in the same family.

8. *The sons of the non-slaveholder are and have always been among the leading and ruling spirits of the South; in industry as well as in politics.* Every man's experience in his own neighborhood will evince this. He has but to task his memory. In this class are the McDuffies, Langdon Cheves, Andrew Jacksons, Henry Clays, and Rusks, of the past; the Hammonds, Yanceys, Orrs, Memmingers, Benjamins, Stephens, Soules, Browns of Mississippi, Simms, Porters, Magraths, Aikens, Maunsel Whites, and an innumerable host of the present; and what is to be noted, these men have not been made demagogues for that reason, as in other quarters, but are among the most conservative among us. Nowhere else in the world have intelligence and virtue disconnected from ancestral estates, the same opportunities for advancement, and nowhere else is their triumph more speedy and signal.

9. *Without the institution of slavery, the great staple products of the South would cease to be grown, and the immense annual results, which are distributed among every class of the community, and which give life to every branch of industry, would cease.* The world furnishes no instances of these products being grown upon a large scale by free labor. The English now acknowledge their failure in the East Indies. Brazil, whose slave population nearly equals our own, is the only South American State which has prospered. Cuba, by her slave labor, showers wealth upon old Spain, whilst the British West India Colonies have now ceased to be a source of revenue, and from opulence have been, by emancipation, reduced to beggary. St. Domingo shared the same fate, and the poor whites have been massacred equally with the rich.

## EXPORTS.

|             | 1789.        | 1860.            |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| HAYTI,..... | \$27,829,000 | \$5 to 6,000,000 |

Sugar is no longer exported, and the quantity of Coffee scarcely exceeds one-third, and of Cotton one-tenth, of the exports of 1789. This I give upon Northern authority.

| JAMAICA.    | 1805.           | 1857.          |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Sugar.....  | 150,352 hhd.    | 30,459 hhd.    |
| Rum.....    | 93,950 "        | 15,991 "       |
| Coffee..... | 24,137,393 lbs. | 7,095,623 lbs. |



The value of the present slave production of the South is thus given :

*United States Exports for 1859.*

| <i>Of Southern Origin—</i>  |               | 1859. |
|---|---------------|-------|
| Cotton.....   | \$161,434,923 |       |
| Tobacco.....  | 21,074,038    |       |
| Rice.....   | 2,207,048     |       |
| Naval Stores.....   | 3,694,474     |       |
| Sugar.....  | 196,735       |       |
| Molasses.....   | 75,699        |       |
| Hemp.....   | 9,227         |       |
| Total.....  | 188,693,496   |       |
| Other from South.....   | 8,108,632     |       |
| Cotton Manufactures.....  | 4,989,733     |       |
| Total from South.....   | 198,389,351   |       |
| From the North.....   | 78,217,202    |       |
| Total Merchandise.....  | 278,392,080   |       |
| Specie.....   | 57,502,305    |       |
| To the Southern credit, however, must be given :  |               |       |
| 60 per cent. of the cotton manufactured, being, for raw materials.....  | \$3,669,106   |       |
| Breadstuffs (the North having received from the South a value as large in these as the whole foreign export)..... | 40,047,000    |       |
|   | 43,716,106    |       |
| Add.....  | 198,389,351   |       |
| Southern.....   | 242,105,457   |       |
| Northern contributions.....   | 34,501,008    |       |

10. *If emancipation be brought about as will undoubtedly be the case, unless the encroachments of the fanatical majorities of the North are resisted now the slaveholders, in the main, will escape the degrading equality which must result, by emigration, for which they would have the means, by disposing of their personal chattels : whilst the non-slaveholders, without these resources, would be compelled to remain and endure the degradation. This is a startling consideration. In Northern communities, where the free negro is one in a hundred of the total population, he is recognized and acknowledged often as a pest, and in many cases even his presence is prohibited by law. What would be the case in many of our States, where every other inhabitant is a negro, or in many of our communities, as for example the parishes around and about*

Charleston, and in the vicinity of New Orleans where there are from twenty to one hundred negroes to each white inhabitant? Low as would this class of people sink by emancipation in idleness, superstition and vice, the white man compelled to live among them, would by the power exerted over him, sink even lower, unless as is to be supposed he would prefer to suffer death instead.

In conclusion, my dear sir, I must apologize to the non-slaveholders of the South, of which class, I was myself until very recently a member, for having deigned to notice at all the infamous libels which the common enemies of the South have circulated against them, and which our every-day experience refutes; but the occasion seemed a fitting one to place them truly and rightly before the world. This I have endeavored faithfully to do. They fully understand the momentous questions which now agitate the land in all their relations. They perceive the inevitable drift of Northern aggression, and know that if necessity impel to it, as I verily believe it does at this moment, the establishment of a Southern confederation will be a sure refuge from the storm. *In such a confederation our rights and possessions would be secure, and the wealth being retained at home, to build up our towns and cities, to extend our railroads, and increase our shipping, which now goes in tariffs or other involuntary or voluntary tributes,\* to other sections; opulence would be diffused throughout all classes, and we should become the freest, the happiest and the most prosperous and powerful nation upon earth.*

Your obedient servant,

J. D. B. DEBOW.

ROBERT N. GOURDIN, Esq., Charleston, S. C.

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\* The annual drain in profits which is going on from the South to the North is thus set down by Mr. Kettell, of New York:

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Bounties to fisheries, per annum.....                        | \$1,500,000   |
| Customs, per annum, disbursed at the North.....              | 40,000,000    |
| Profits of manufacturers.....                                | 30,000,000    |
| Profits of importers.....                                    | 16,000,000    |
| Profits of shipping, imports and exports.....                | 40,000,000    |
| Profits of travellers.....                                   | 60,000,000    |
| Profits of teachers and others at the South, sent North..... | 5,000,000     |
| Profits of agents, brokers, commissions, etc.....            | 10,000,000    |
| Profits of capital drawn from the South.....                 | 30,000,000    |
| Total from these sources.....                                | \$231,500,000 |

This, from the beginning of the Government, making all proper deduction from year to year, has given to the North over \$2,500,000,000 of Southern wealth. Are her accumulations, then, surprising, and can one be surprised if accumulation should appear to be less in the South!

The "1860 ASSOCIATION" commends the perusal of the following extract from a communication to the Boston Courier of 8th December, 1860, signed "Langdon." Emanating from a Northern source, it possesses peculiar interest.

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#### HAS THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT THE RIGHT TO COERCE A STATE?

To consider this question, a distinction must first be drawn between the right of war and the exercise of a constitutional function of the government on itself, in a constitutional way. The right of war exists only against other governments—and by the law of nations, it is immaterial whether these are usurping or legitimate governments. It suffices that each party has an actual possession or government, a control *de facto* over some territory or people which it enjoys, disconnected with, or by dispossessing the other's government. The writers on public law agree that a declaration of war necessarily admits that the party declared against is an actual government—even though its legitimacy as a government may be the very point in dispute; and because it is, in fact, a government, other nations who have treaties of amity and peace with the one, may enter into like treaties with the other, and recognize the government *de facto* without impairing their neutrality or violating their obligations of amity and peace to those who claim legitimate authority over the government *de facto*. It is not from the length of time that the government *de facto* has existed, but from the fact that the opposing government claiming to be legitimate, cannot control the other by civil means, and has not an actual military possession and control over it—that other nations are justified in treating it as a government and entering into alliances with it. Thus, in our own War of Independence, after the declaration, Spain, Holland, and France, acknowledged the independence of the Colonies, and formed treaties, without those acts violating their existing treaties with England.

If, then, the secession of a State from this Union were followed by a declaration of war against her by the United States, such declaration would open to foreign nations the right to make alliances and treaties with her, commercial and otherwise, without thereby violating their treaties with the United States; and all Europe, if their interests or sympathies led them in that direction, would be morally free to aid and help her in sustaining her act of secession.

Attempts to coerce by war, then, would tend, by relieving foreign nations from the obligation of non-interference in domestic questions, to confirm secession, and to expose what ought to be a purely domestic question of constitutional construction to the complications and embarrassments which rival powers could easily create, without endangering existing treaties. It would be the most effectual means of removing all the obligations of a State, and enabling her to resist any return to them. No one could be so foolish as to desire to submit the construction of the Constitution of this Union to the interference of foreign and hostile nations. It would surely bring down on this Union the calamity of disunion, and in itself be unconstitutional. The construction of the Constitution is domestic to the States of the Union, and should be adjusted through their domestic machinery, without exposing these States, by the imprudence of hostilities, to that foreign interference which the Union was created to avoid.

Half the strength of these Colonies in the Revolution was derived from foreign interference, and had England, by avoiding force, kept the question of taxation purely domestic, she might have preserved, instead of losing, her connexion with her Colonies, and been spared the hatred that has survived the hostilities that gave it birth by more than eighty years. It was madness in her so to act as to let in the rival and jealous powers of Europe to give aid and comfort to the weaker side. Let such madness be avoided by us.

The free people of the thirty-three States of this Union boast that their obedience is paid to the power of the laws they make, and not to the persons who are entrusted with the duty of executing them; that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.

We may as well commence this examination by the proposition—*That if a seceding State cannot be coerced by the general government without violating the Constitution and the laws, then she cannot be coerced at all.* This remits us to two enquiries: What is the offence against the Constitution by a State when she secedes? and, What Constitutional mode and means of punishment or prevention by the general government exist? It is not our purpose to draw the line between secession and revolution, as abstract ideas; we are content to examine a single case, which is stated thus: The people of a sovereign State in Convention secede from the Union by repealing the ratification she gave to the Constitution of that Union of 1788. What is the offence? and what the means of prevention or punishment?

We admit that while she remains in the Union there are many means pointed out by the Constitution to compel her citizens to obedience to the law. The Constitution was binding upon her citizens, because the State in her sovereignty sitting in Convention adopted it, or to use the better expression, ratified it. The Constitution was a mere project or speculation of a Convention of philosophers when it came to the State Convention—it depended on the people of each State in its State Convention for the power to become a law; and because States were sovereign and did ratify it, therefore it became part and parcel of the State Constitutions, of equal force and obligation with the other organic acts of the people of the States in their sovereignty, providing for a government for the State. It has the like force on the sovereign people of a State with their Constitution, and no more, no less, in this, that it purports to represent the will of the State, and is law so long as it has the solemn consent of the people of the State, acting in their sovereignty. By a Constitution, the people of a State delegate the power of representing their sovereignty; but they do not *renounce* the sovereignty or transfer it. A Constitution makes agents to exercise powers of government, and limits and defines the spheres and powers of these agents, the servants of the people. It does not transfer the sovereignty from the people to their agents, making the agent to be sovereign, and the former sovereign to be the subject. On the contrary, every constitutional government announces that all powers are derived from the will of the people, and all powers not granted by the people are reserved. The agent cannot have more powers than the principal. The creature cannot be greater than the creator. Let us look at the ratifying part of the Constitution of the United States. It was proposed that when nine States should agree that this instrument should be part of their constitution, or organic law; then this general agent should be organized and go into force. The Congress of the old confederation, whom this new plan proposed to supplant, were friendly to the submission of the new plan; but mark the logic,—the plan provided for the extinction of the old confederation by secession. The Congress favored it, and the Conventions of the States were called to consider the secession from the Confederation and the adoption of the new constitution. Nine States peacefully seceded in 1787 and 1788. Two States—Rhode Island and North Carolina—lingered a year and a half before they joined the new Confederation: North Carolina not joining until satisfactory amendments were made to the Constitution, and Rhode Island joining upon conditions.

Notwithstanding the 12th article of confederation says, the articles shall be inviolably preserved and the Union be perpetual, and no alteration shall be hereafter made unless it be confirmed by the Legislature of every State, yet there has never been a question that the States could not rightfully secede from the old Confederation, although its articles of constitution were entitled “articles of confederation and perpetual union,” and in the new Constitution as amended, the words, reserving to the States all powers not granted, are as clear as in the Articles of Confederation (see Art. 10): “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” It follows, then, that if secession was no offence in 1788 against the old Confederation, unless words granting away the right to secede are found in the new Constitution, or words prohibiting secession to the States, then the right is reserved intact by the several States. We find no such grant nor such prohibition. The right of secession remains a part of the sovereignty of the respective States, just as perfectly as when they last exercised



it in 1788-9 in order to adopt this present Constitution. It is nowhere made an offence against the new government for the State to resume its delegated powers. Whilst she is in the Union the delegation of powers is good against her, because the theory of the Union is the delegating the same powers by each State to the one general agent. It is the equality of rights and equality of obligations that makes the base and substance of the Union—and the Act of each State in her sovereignty makes the Supreme Court of the United States the judge of all questions arising under that grant of powers, but not on other subjects. Finding, then, neither grant by the States, nor prohibition to them, of their sovereign power to secede, and having shown that when called on to ratify this Convention they were asked to do it by the act of secession from the existing one—it may well be deemed, this power remains in the people of the State, unless we find some necessary implication of an inconsistent nature arising elsewhere in the Constitution: such as a grant of power to coerce a State when negligent of her obligations under the Constitution. Is there any such grant? None appears—powers over individuals appear. The judges of a State are commanded to obedience to the decisions of the Supreme Court, but there are no words commanding the legislatures of the several States. Those holding the executive power of the States in the Union may, perhaps, be reached directly through the judiciary as individuals, (as Congress has attempted in the last Consular act on the subject of granting passports) but no implication as to the States in their sovereignty is to be discovered. Congress, even, is only authorized to make laws for executing the powers granted to itself and those vested in the Government by this Constitution, or in any department or officer thereof. This subject may be still more conclusively set at rest by referring to the journals of the Convention that formed the Constitution.

We find there that Mr. Edmund Randolph's programme, included a power to coerce States who were negligent of their duties or engagements, but that the Convention steadfastly resisted and rejected the granting of such a power to the General Government. It was not incorporated in the Constitution when submitted to the States for their approval. This is not all. So jealous were the several States, lest this power afterwards might be assumed by construction, that only six States ratified the Constitution unconditionally. Six other States attached conditions to their ratification, either directly as conditions, or else by declaring the construction of the Constitution on which they ratified it, and insisting that this construction should be made more clear by amendments and explicit declarations. One State, North Carolina, refused to give even a conditional ratification, before the amendments were made. The leading condition of construction thus made imperative by the concordant action of the States forming the Union, was immediately afterwards substantially adopted as an amendment, being article 10th: "that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people." The States who insisted on thus "making assurance doubly sure," with regard to the limits of the delegation of powers, were South Carolina, New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, with whom North Carolina stood. (Vide Elliott's Debates on the Federal Constitution, Vol. 4, Ratification of the States.) The power to coerce cannot then be derived from any just implication, and was refused to be incorporated originally in the Constitution. The States who formed this Union stood after it was, both by their conditional ratification and by the amendment article 10, adopted and put into existence as a general government, exactly as they stood in relation to the old confederation, when they declared, July 9th, 1775, that their style should be the United States of America, and that "Each State retains its sovereignty, freedom, independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States," so far as their reserved rights were concerned. Coming, then, to a closer consideration of the objects of the Union of these United States, and of the delegation of powers to effect those objects, we find that the recitals of the objects of the "perpetual union" established in 1777, coincide perfectly with the objects of the "more perfect union" commenced in 1757, so far as each provides for the mutual and general welfare, common defence and security of their liberties. In the Constitution, we find "to establish justice and insure domestic tranquility," added to the prior objects. It does not appear from the avowed objects of the Union of the States, any more than from the grants of powers to the General Government, or from the prohibition to the States to exercise certain acts of sovereign power

whilst in the Union, that a prohibition of the authority to secede from the Union, or the power to coerce a State, were either of them included in the articles of the Constitution, or that any State has ever ratified to the United States these parts of her sovereign powers, or been even asked to separate them from her sovereignty. And when we contemplate that the framers of the Constitution proposed the peaceful secession of nine States from the old Confederation to the new one, as the only means of starting or instituting this present general government, how can it be imagined that they looked with such horror on secession by act of the people, in State sovereignty, as to mark with eternal future reprobation, the act they were then inviting the States to take?

The people of one State surrendered no part of their sovereignty over their own State to other States. Whilst in the Union, the Constitution is their law, because it is their act. The general government has no sovereignty over any State of this Union. It is the agent of the States, having several powers from each; it can touch no subject not included in the powers granted to it by the States. We have seen that neither the pretence of coercion nor the pretence of secession being prohibited to a State is supported by the record. The general government has no power to act in a case of secession. It concerns the States, in their sovereignty, and is beyond the limited sphere of the general government. Whom, then, does secession concern? And is there any remedy or retribution? We answer that it concerns the other States, in that portion of their sovereignty not delegated to the general government, nor even to the State legislatures. It concerns the sovereign people of each State in this Union, and them only. Congress has no powers to represent them. The people of the sovereign States have delegated no powers to any agent, State or general, to represent them. In their conventions alone can they meet this issue, by either delegating powers to some agent or agencies equal to the emergency; or consider what other appropriate remedies, if any, are necessary. To the question, is there any retribution for secession? we say: not under the Constitution. But outside of the Constitution, is retribution to be sought? If the States feel justly offended because the seceding State has withdrawn from their alliance, they can treat her as a hostile neighbor, a nation with whom they have cause of war, and may follow her with all the means that the law of nations points out in cases of public war. If they conquer her, they may make her a territory, or annex her as territory to some State of the Union. But from the moment of secession she has no rights in the sisterhood of States—no protection in the Constitution. She is alien and stranger. Whether the States will resort to the harsh means of war, and rush into the discords of social evils sure to follow in the footsteps of such a war, or whether recognizing some justice in their grievances, peaceful means to mitigate by treaties the evils of disunion, or else by timely additional guarantees in the Constitution, to give full assurance of the equality and protection demanded in the Union, are questions of future policy for discussion in each State.



# THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF ABOLITIONISM.

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EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. HENRY J. VAN DYKE.

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The First Presbyterian church, corner of Remsen and Clinton streets, Brooklyn, was recently densely crowded with a highly intelligent congregation, who listened with marked interest and attention to a discourse from their pastor, Rev. Henry J. Van Dyke, on the Character and Influence of Abolitionism from a Scriptural point of view. In his opening supplication, the reverend gentleman prayed that Providence would bless our Southern brethren and restrain the passion of the evil among them; that the master might be made Christ's servant, and the servant Christ's freeman, and so both sit together, united in Christian love, in that church founded by Christ and His Apostles, in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus. He also prayed that God would bless the people of the Northern States, restrain the violence of fanatical men, provide for those who, by the agitation of the times, have been thrown out of employment, keep the speaker himself from teaching anything which was not in accordance with the Divine will, and disabuse the minds of his hearers of all prejudice and passion, so that they might be willing to be convinced of the truth.

His text was chosen from St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, sixth chapter, from the first to the fifth verse, inclusive :

1. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 "And they that have believing masters let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

3. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome

words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ;

4. "He is proud, knowing nothing but doting about questions and strife of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5. "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

I propose, he said, to discuss the character and influence of abolitionism. With this view, I have selected a text from the Bible, and purpose to adhere to the letter and spirit of its teaching. We acknowledge in this place but one standard of morals, but one authoritative and infallible rule of faith and practice. For we are Christians here; not Papists to bow down to the dictation of any man or church; not heathen philosophers, to grope our way by the feeble glimmerings of the light of nature; not modern infidels, to appeal from the written law of God to the corrupt and fickle tribunal of reason and humanity; but Christians, on whose banner is inscribed this sublime challenge—"To the law and to the testimony—if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Let me direct your special attention to the language of our text. There is no dispute among commentators, there is no room for dispute as to the meaning of the expression "servants under the yoke." Even Mr. Barnes, who is himself a distinguished abolitionist, and has done more perhaps, than any other man in this country to propagate abolition doctrines, admits that "the addition of the phrase 'under the yoke'" shows undoubtedly that it (*i. e.* the original word *doulos*) is to be understood here of slavery. Let me quote another testimony on this point from an eminent Scotch divine, I mean Dr. McKnight, whose exposition of the epistle is a standard work in Great Britain and in this country, and whose associations must exempt him from all suspicion of pro-slavery prejudices. He introduces his exposition of this chapter with the following explanation:—"Because the law of Moses allowed no Israelite to be made a slave for life without his own consent, the Judaizing teachers, to allure slaves to their party, taught that under the gospel, likewise, involuntary slavery is unlawful. This doctrine the apostle condemned here, as in his other epistles, by enjoining Christian slaves to honor and obey their masters, whether they were believers or unbelievers, and by assuring Timothy that if any person taught otherwise, he opposed the wholesome precepts of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the gospel, which in all points is conformable to godliness or sound morality, and was puffed up with pride, without possessing any true knowledge either of the Jewish or Christian revelation." Our learned Scotch friend then goes on to expound the passage in the following paraphrase, which we commend to the prayerful attention of all whom it may concern :

"Let whatever Christian slaves are under the yoke of unbelievers pay their own masters all respect and obedience, that the character of God whom we worship may not be calumniated, and the doctrine of the gospel may not be evil spoken of as tending to destroy the

political rights of mankind. And those Christian slaves who have believing masters, let them not despise them, fancying that they are their equals because they are their brethren in Christ; for, though all Christians are equal as to religious privileges, slaves are inferior to their masters in station. Wherefore, let them serve their masters more diligently, because they who enjoy the benefit of their service, are believers and beloved of God. 'These things teach, and exhort the brethren to practice them.' If any one teach differently by affirming that, under the gospel, slaves are not bound to serve their masters, but ought to be made free, and does not consent to the wholesome commandments which are our Lord Jesus Christ's, and to the doctrine of the gospel which in all points is conformable to true morality, he is puffed up with pride, and knoweth nothing either of the Jewish or the Christian revelations, though he pretends to have great knowledge of both. But is distempered in his mind about idle questions and debate of words which afford no foundation for such a doctrine, but are the source of envy, contention, evil speaking, unjust suspicion that the truth is not sincerely maintained, keen disputings carried on contrary to conscience by men wholly corrupted in their minds and destitute of the true doctrine of the gospel, who reckon whatever produces most money is the best religion; from all such impious teachers withdraw thyself, and do not dispute with them."

The text, as thus expounded by an American abolitionist and a Scotch divine, (whose testimony need not be confirmed by quotations from all the other commentators,) is a prophecy written for these days, and wonderfully applicable to our present circumstances. It gives us a life-like picture of abolitionism in its principles, its spirit and its practice, and furnishes us plain instruction in regard to our duty in the premises. Before entering upon the discussion of the doctrine, let us define the terms employed. By abolitionism we mean the principles and measures of abolitionists. And what is an abolitionist? He is one who believes that slaveholding is sin, and ought therefore to be abolished. This is the fundamental, the characteristic, the essential principle of abolitionism—that slaveholding is sin—that holding men in involuntary servitude is an infringement upon the rights of man, a heinous crime in the sight of God. A man may believe on political or commercial grounds that slavery is an undesirable system, and that slave labor is not the most profitable; he may have various views as to the rights of slaveholders under the constitution of the country; he may think this or that law upon the statute books of Southern States, is wrong; but this does not constitute him an abolitionist, unless he believes that slaveholding is morally wrong. The alleged sinfulness of slaveholding, as it is the characteristic doctrine, so it is the strength of abolitionism in all its ramified and various forms. It is by this doctrine that it lays hold upon the hearts and consciences of men, that it comes as a disturbing force into our ecclesiastical and civil institutions, and by exciting religious animosity, (which all history proves to be the strongest of human passions,) imparts a peculiar intensity to every



contest into which it enters. And you will perceive it is just here that abolitionism presents a proper subject for discussion in the pulpit—for it is one great purpose of the Bible, and therefore one great duty of God's ministers in its exposition, to show what is sin and what is not. Those who hold the doctrine that slaveholding is sin, and ought therefore to be abolished, differ very much in the extent to which they reduce their theory to practice. In some this faith is almost without works. They content themselves with only voting in such a way as in their judgment will best promote the ultimate triumph of their views. Others stand off at what they suppose a safe distance, as Shimei did when he stood on an opposite hill to curse King David, and rebuke the sin and denounce divine judgments upon the sinner. Others more practical, if not more prudent, go into the very midst of the alleged wickedness and teach "servants under the yoke" that they ought not to count their own masters worthy of all honor—that liberty is their inalienable right—which they should maintain, if necessary, even by the shedding of blood. Now, it is not for me to decide who of all these are the truest to their own principles. It is not for me to decide whether the man who preaches this doctrine in brave words, amid applauding multitudes in the city of Brooklyn, or the one who, in the stillness of the night, and in the face of the law's terrors, goes to practice the preaching at Harper's Ferry, is the most consistent abolitionist and the most heroic man. It is not for me to decide which is the most important part of a tree; and if the tree be poisonous, which is the most injurious, the root, or the branches, or the fruit? But I am here to-night, in God's name, and by His help, to show that this tree of abolitionism is evil and only evil, root and branch, flower and leaf and fruit; that it springs from and is nourished by an utter rejection of the Scriptures; that it produces no real benefit to the enslaved, and is the fruitful source of division, and strife, and infidelity in both church and State. I have four distinct propositions on the subject to maintain—four theses to nail up and defend:—

I. Abolitionism has no foundation in the Scriptures.

II. Its principles have been promulgated chiefly by misrepresentation and abuse.

III. It leads, in multitudes of cases, and by a logical process, to utter infidelity.

IV. It is the chief cause of the strife that agitates and the danger that threatens our country.

#### I.—ABOLITIONISM HAS NO FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE.

Passing by the records of the patriarchal age, and waving the question as to those servants in Abraham's family, who, in the simple but expressive language of Scripture, "were bought with his money," let us come at once to the tribunal of that law which God promulgated amid the solemnities of Sinai. What said the law and the testimony to that peculiar people over whom God ruled, and for whose institu-

tions He has assumed the responsibility? The answer is in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, in these words:

“And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond servant; but as a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him.”

So far, you will observe, the law refers to the children of Israel, who, by reason of poverty, were reduced to servitude. It was their right to be free at the year of jubilee, unless they chose to remain in perpetual bondage, for which case provision is made in other and distinct enactments. But not so with slaves of foreign birth. There was no year of jubilee provided for them. For what says the law? Read the 44, 46 verses of the same chapter:

“Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you—of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as inheritance for your children after you to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever.”

There it is, plainly written in the divine law. No legislative enactment; no statute framed by legal skill was ever more explicit and incapable of perversion. When the abolitionist tells me that slaveholding is sin, in the simplicity of my faith in the Holy Scriptures, I point him to this sacred record, and tell him in all candor, as my text does, that his teaching blasphemes the name of God and His doctrine. When he begins to doat about questions and strifes of words, appealing to the Declaration of Independence, and asserting that the idea of property in men is an enormity and a crime, I still hold him to the record, saying, “Ye shall take him as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession.” When he waxes warm—as he always does if his opponent quote Scripture (which is the great test to try the spirits, whether they be of God—the very spear of Ithuriel, to reveal their true character)—when he gets angry, and begins to pour out his evil surmisings and abuse upon slaveholders—I obey the precept which says, “from such withdraw thyself,” comforting myself with this thought: that the wisdom of God is wiser than men, and the kindness of God kinder than men. Philosophers may reason and reformers may rave till doomsday, they never can convince me that God, in the Levitical law, or in any other law, sanctioned sin; and, as I know, from the plain passage I have quoted, and many more like it, that He did sanction slaveholding among His ancient people. I know, also, by the logic of that faith which believes the Bible to be His Word, that slaveholding is not sin. There are men even among professing Christians, and not a few ministers of the Gospel, who answer this argument from the Old Testament Scriptures by a simple denial of their authority. They do not tell us how God could ever or anywhere countenance that which is morally

slaveholding. They admitted slaveholders to the communion of the church. In our text, masters are acknowledged as "brethren, faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." If the New Testament is to be received as a faithful history, no man was ever rejected by the apostolic church upon the ground that he owned slaves. If he abused his power as a master, if he availed himself of the authority conferred by the Roman law to commit adultery, or murder, or cruelty, he was rejected for these crimes, just as he would be rejected now for similar crimes from any Christian church in our Southern States. If parents abused or neglected their children, they were censured, not for having children, but for not treating them properly. And so with the slaveholder. It was not the owning of slaves, but the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of his station, that made him a subject for church discipline. The mere fact that he was a slaveholder no more subjected him to censure than the mere fact that he was a father or a husband. It is upon the recognized lawfulness of the relation, that all the precepts regulating the reciprocal duties of that relation are based.

These precepts are scattered all through the inspired epistles. There is not one command or exhortation to emancipate the slave. The Apostle well knew that for the present emancipation would be no real blessing to him. But the master is exhorted to be kind and considerate, and the slave to be obedient, that so they might preserve the unity of that church in which there is no distinction between Greek or Jew, male or female, bond or free. Oh, if ministers of the Gospel in this land or age had but followed Paul as he followed Christ, and, instead of hurling anathemas and exciting wrath against slaveholders, had sought only to bring both master and slave to the fountain of Emanuel's blood; if the agencies of the blessed Gospel had only been suffered to work their way quietly, as the light and dew of the morning, into the structure of society, both North and South, how different would have been the position of our country this day before God! How different would have been the privileges enjoyed by the poor black man's soul, which, in this bitter contest, has been too much neglected and despised. Then there would have been no need to have converted our churches into military barracks for collecting firearms to carry on war upon a distant frontier. No need for a sovereign State to execute the fearful penalty of the law upon the invader for doing no more than honestly to carry out the teaching of abolition preachers, who bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, while they touch them not with one of their fingers. No need for the widow and the orphan to weep in anguish of heart over those cold graves, for whose dishonor and desolation God will hold the real authors responsible. No occasion or pretext for slaveholding States to pass such stringent laws for the punishment of the secret incendiary and the prevention of servile war.

I shall not attempt to show what will be the condition of the African race in this country when the Gospel shall have brought all classes under its complete dominion. What civil and social relations



men will sustain in the times of millennial glory I do not know. I cordially embrace the current opinion of our church that slavery is permitted and regulated by the divine law under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations, not as the final destiny of the enslaved, but as an important and necessary process in their transition from heathenism to Christianity—a wheel in the great machinery of Providence, by which the final redemption is to be accomplished. However this may be, one thing I know, and every abolitionist might know it if he would, that there are Christian families at the South in which a patriarchal fidelity and affection subsist between the bond and the free, and where slaves are better fed and clothed and instructed, and have a better opportunity for salvation than the majority of laboring people in the city of New York. If the tongue of abolitionism had only kept silence these twenty years past, the number of such families would be tenfold as great. Fanaticism at the North is one chief stumbling block in the way of the Gospel at the South. This is one great grievance that presses to-day upon the hearts of our Christian brethren at the South. This, in a measure, explains why such men as Dr. Thornwell, of South Carolina, and Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans—men whose genius and learning and piety would adorn any state or station—are willing to secede from the Union. They feel that the influence of the Christian ministry is hindered, and their power to do good to both master and slave crippled, by the constant agitations of abolitionism in our national councils, and the incessant turmoil excited by the unscriptural dogma that slaveholding is sin.

## II.—THE PRINCIPLES OF ABOLITIONISM HAVE BEEN PROPOGATED CHIEFLY BY MISREPRESENTATION AND ABUSE.

Having no foundation in Scripture, it does not carry on its warfare by scripture weapons. Its prevailing spirit is fierce and proud, and its language is full of wrath and bitterness. Let me prove this by testimony from its own lips. I quote Dr. Channing, of Boston, whose name is a tower of strength to the abolition cause, and whose memory is their continual boast. In a work published in the year 1836, I find the following words:

“The abolitionists have done wrong, I believe; nor is their wrong to be winked at because done fanatically or with good intentions; for how much mischief may be wrought with good designs! They have fallen into the common error of enthusiasts, that of exaggerating their object, of feeling as if no evil existed but that which they opposed, and as if no guilt could be compared with that of countenancing and upholding it. The tone of their newspapers, so far as I have seen them, has often been fierce, bitter and abusive. They have sent forth their orators, some of them transported with fiery zeal, to sound the alarm against slavery through the land, to gather together young and old, pupils from schools, females hardly arrived at years of discretion, the ignorant, the excitable, the impetuous, and to organize these into associations for the battle against oppression. Very unhap-

pily they preached their doctrine to the colored people and collected them into societies. To this mixed and excitable multitude, minute heart-rending descriptions of slavery were given in piercing tones of passion; and slaveholders were held up as monsters of cruelty and crime. The abolitionist, indeed, proposed to convert slaveholders; and for this end he approached them with vituperation, and exhausted on them the vocabulary of abuse. And he has reaped as he sowed."

Such is the testimony of Dr. Channing, given in the year 1836. What would he have thought and said if he had lived until the year 1860, and seen this little stream, over whose infant violence he lamented, swelling into a torrent and flooding the land? Abolitionism is abusive in its persistent misrepresentation of the legal principles involved in the relation between master and slave. They reiterate, in a thousand exciting forms, the assertion that the idea of property in man blots out his manhood and degrades him to the level of a brute or a stone. "Domestic slavery," says Dr. Wayland, in his work on Moral Science, "supposes at best that the relation between master and slave is not that which exists between man and man, but is a modification at least of that which exists between man and the brutes." Do not these abolitionist philosophers know that according to the laws of every civilized country on earth a man has property in his children and a woman has property in her husband? The statutes of the State of New York and of every other Northern State recognize and protect this property, and our courts of justice have repeatedly assessed its value. If a man is killed on a railroad, his wife may bring suit and recover damages for the pecuniary loss she has suffered. If one man entice away the daughter of another, and marry her while she is still under age, the father may bring a civil suit for damages for the loss of that child's services, and the pecuniary compensation is the only redress the law provides. Thus the common law of Christendom and the statutes of our own State recognize property in man. In what does that property consist? Simply in such services as a man or a child may properly be required to render. This is all that the Levitical law, or any other law, means when it says, "Your bondmen shall be your possession or property and an inheritance for your children." The property consists not in the right to treat the slave like a brute, but simply in a legal claim for such services as a man in that position may properly be required to render. And yet abolitionists, in the face of the divine law, persist in denouncing the very relation between master and slave, "as a modification, at least, of that which exists between man and the brutes." This, however, is not the worst or most prevalent form which their abusive spirit assumes. Their mode of arguing the question of slaveholding, by a pretended appeal to facts, is a tissue of misrepresentation from beginning to end. Let me illustrate my meaning by a parallel case. Suppose I undertake to prove the wickedness of marriage as it exists in the city of New York. In this discussion suppose the Bible is excluded, or at least that it is not

recognized as having exclusive jurisdiction in the decision of the question. My first appeal is to the statute law of the State.

I show there enactments which nullify the law of God and make divorce a marketable and cheap commodity. I collect the advertisements of your daily papers, in which lawyers offer to procure the legal separation of man and wife for a stipulated price, to say nothing in this sacred place of other advertisements which decency forbids me to quote. Then I turn to the records of our criminal courts, and find that every day some cruel husband beats his wife, or some unnatural parent murders his child, or some discontented wife or husband seeks the dissolution of the marriage bond. In the next place, I turn to the orphan asylums and hospitals, and show there the miserable wrecks of domestic tyranny in wives deserted and children maimed by drunken parents. In the last place, I go through our streets and into our tenement houses, and count the thousands of ragged children, who, amid ignorance and filth, are training for the prison and gallows. Summing all these facts together, I put them forth as the fruits of marriage in the city of New York, and a proof that the relation itself is sinful. If I were a novelist, and had written a book to illustrate this same doctrine, I would call this array of facts a "Key." In this Key, I say nothing about the sweet charities and affections that flourish in ten thousand homes, not a word about the multitude of loving kindnesses that characterize the daily life of honest people, about the instruction and discipline that are training children at ten thousand firesides for usefulness here and glory hereafter; all this I ignore, and quote only the statute book, the newspapers, the records of criminal courts and the miseries of the abodes of poverty. Now, what have I done? I have not misstated or exaggerated a single fact. And yet am I not a falsifier and slanderer of the deepest dye! Is there a virtuous woman or an honest man in this city, whose cheeks would not burn with indignation at my one-sided and injurious statements? Now, this is just what abolitionism has done in regard to slaveholding. It has undertaken to illustrate its cardinal doctrine in works of fiction, and then, to sustain the creation of its fancy, has attempted to underpin it with an accumulation of facts. These facts are collected in precisely the way I have described. The statute books of slaveholding States are searched, and every wrong enactment collated, newspaper reports of cruelty and crime on the part of wicked masters are treasured up and classified, all the outrages that have been perpetrated "by lewd fellows of the baser sort," of whom there are plenty, both North and South, are eagerly seized and recorded, and this mass of vileness and filth collected from the kennels and sewers of society is put forth as a faithful exhibition of slaveholding. Senators in the forum and ministers in the pulpit, distil this raw material into the more refined slander "that Southern society is essentially barbarous, and that slaveholding had its origin in hell." Legislative bodies enact and re-enact statutes, which declare that slaveholding is such an enormous crime, that if a Southern man, under the broad shield of the Constitution, and with



the decisions of the Supreme Court of the country in his hand, shall come within their jurisdiction, and 'set up a claim to a fugitive slave, he shall be punished with a fine of \$2,000 and fifteen years' imprisonment. This method of argument has continued until multitudes of honest Christian people in this and other lands believe that slaveholding is the sin of sins, the sum of all villainies. Let me illustrate this by an incident in my own experience. A few years since I took from the centre table of a Christian family in Scotland, by whom I had been most kindly entertained, a book entitled, "Life and Manners in America." On the blank leaf was an inscription, stating that the book had been bestowed upon one of the children of the family as a reward of diligence in an institution of learning. The frontispiece was a picture of a man of fierce countenance beating a naked woman. The contents of the book were professedly compiled from the testimony of Americans upon the subject of slavery. I dare not quote in this place the extracts which I made in my memorandum. It will be sufficient to say that the book asserts as undoubted facts that the banks of the Mississippi are studded with iron gallows for the punishment of slaves—that in the City of Charleston the bloody block on which masters cut off the hands of disobedient servants may be seen in the public squares, and that sins against chastity are common and unrebuked in professedly Christian families.

Now, in my heart, I did not feel angry at the author of that book, nor at the school teacher who bestowed it upon his scholar, for in Christian charity I gave them credit for honesty in the case; but standing there a stranger among the martyr memories of that glorious land to which my heart had so often made its pilgrimage, I did feel that you and I, and every man in America was wronged by the revilers of their native land, who teach foreigners that hanging and cutting off hands, and beating women, are the characteristics of our life and manners.

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I trust and pray, and call upon you to unite with me in the supplication, that God would give abolitionists repentance and a better mind, so that in time to come they may at least propagate their principles in decent and respectful language.

### III.—ABOLITIONISM LEADS, IN MULTITUDES OF CASES, AND BY A LOGICAL PROCESS, TO UTTER INFIDELITY.

On this point, I would not, and will not, be misunderstood. I do not say that abolitionism is infidelity. I speak only of the tendencies of the system as indicated in its avowed principles and demonstrated in its practical fruits.

It does not try slavery by the Bible; but as one of its leading advocates has recently declared, it tries the Bible by the principles of freedom. It insists that the word of God must be made to support certain human opinions or forfeit all claims upon our faith. That I may not be suspected of exaggeration on this point, let me quote from

the recent work of Mr. Barnes a passage which may well arrest the attention of all thinking men :

“There are great principles in our nature, as God has made us, which can never be set aside by any authority of a professed revelation. If a book, claiming to be a revelation from God, by any fair interpretation defended slavery, or placed it on the same basis as the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, such a book would not, and could not, be received by the mass of mankind as a Divine revelation.”

This assumption, that men are capable of judging beforehand what is to be expected in a Divine revelation, is the cockatrice's egg, from which, in all ages, heresies have been hatched. This is the spider's web which men have spun out of their own brains, and, clinging to which, they have attempted to swing over the yawning abyss of infidelity. Alas, how many have fallen in and been dashed to pieces ! When a man sets up the great principles of our nature (by which he always means his own preconceived opinions) as the supreme tribunal before which even the law of God must be tried—when a man says “the Bible must teach abolitionism or I will not receive it,” he has already cut loose from the sheet anchor of faith. True belief says, “Speak, Lord, thy servant waits to hear.” Abolitionism says, “Speak, Lord, but speak in accordance with the principles of human nature, or they cannot be received by the great mass of mankind as a Divine revelation.”

The fruit of such principles is just what we might expect. Wherever the seed of abolitionism has been sown broadcast, a plentiful crop of infidelity has sprung up. In the communities where anti-slavery excitement has been most prevalent, the power of the Gospel has invariably declined ; and when the tide of fanaticism begins to subside, the wrecks of church order and of Christian character have been scattered on the shore. I mean no disrespect to New England—to the good men who there stand by the ancient landmarks and contend earnestly for the truth—nor to the illustrious dead whose praise is in all the churches ; but who does not know that the States, in which abolitionism has achieved its most signal triumphs are at the same time the great strongholds of infidelity in the land ? I have often thought that if some of those old pilgrim fathers could come back, in the spirit and power of Elias, to attend a grand celebration at Plymouth rock, they might well preach on this text : “If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” The effect of abolitionism upon individuals is no less striking and mournful than its influence upon communities. It is a remarkable and instructive fact, and one at which Christian men would do well to pause and consider, that in this country all the prominent leaders of abolitionism, outside of the ministry, have become avowed infidels ; and that all our notorious abolition preachers have renounced the great doctrines of grace as they are taught in the standards of the reformed churches—have resorted to the most violent process of interpretation to avoid the obvious meaning of plain Scriptural texts, and ascribed to the apostles of Christ principles from which piety

and moral courage instinctively revolt. They make that to be sin which the Bible does not declare to be sin. They denounce, in language such as the sternest prophets of the Law never employed, a relation which Jesus and His apostles recognized and regulated. They seek to institute terms and texts of Christian communion utterly at variance with the organic law of the church as founded by its Divine Head; and, attempting to justify this usurpation of Divine prerogatives by an appeal from God's law to the dictates of fallen human nature, they would set up a spiritual tyranny more odious and insufferable, because more arbitrary and uncertain in its decisions, than Popery itself. And as the tree is, so have its fruits been. It is not a theory, but a demonstrated fact, that abolitionism leads to infidelity. Such men as Garrison, and Giddings, and Gerrit Smith, have yielded to the current of their own principles and thrown the Bible overboard. Thousands of humbler men who listen to abolition preachers will go and do likewise. And whether it be the restraints of official position, or the preventing grace of God, that enables such preachers to row up the stream and regard the authority of Scripture in other matters, their influence upon this one subject is all the more pernicious because they prophesy in the name of Christ. In this sincere and plain utterance of my deep convictions, I am only discharging my conscience towards the flock over which I am set. When the shepherd seeth the wolf coming, he is bound to give warning.

An article, published twenty years ago in the *Princeton Review*, contains this remarkable language:

"The opinion that slaveholding is itself a crime must operate to produce the disunion of the States and the division of all ecclesiastical societies in this country. Just so far as this opinion operates, it will lead those who entertain it to submit to any sacrifices to carry it out and give it effect. We shall become two nations in feeling, which must soon render us two nations in fact."

These words are wonderfully prophetic, and they who read the signs of the times must see that the period of their fulfilment draws near. In regard to ecclesiastical societies, the division foretold is already, in a great measure, accomplished. Three of our great religious denominations have been rent in twain by the simple question, "Is slaveholding a sin?"









OCT. 68



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